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## USDA MEASURES FIELD CROPS PLANTED IN 2002

In 2001, New England experienced a warm, dry growing season which placed crops under severe stress at many locations. Drought and a massive armyworm attack in July combined to significantly reduce dry hay yields. This year, farm operators are hoping weather conditions will be more favorable. Temperatures this spring have averaged slightly above normal, however, rain is needed throughout the region to alleviate dry soil conditions.

To gather the most accurate information on the 2002 crop situation, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will be asking farmers about their crops in the June Agricultural Survey. The survey collects acreage information on field corn, potato, oat and barley plantings, as well as hay acreage intended for harvest. It also measures grain stocks on hand, and helps to establish official statistics for the number of farms and land in farms.

"This annual USDA survey is conducted nationwide. The survey provides information crucial for reliable estimates of crops, farm numbers and farm acreage in New England. Therefore, it is important New England farmers participate in the June Agricultural Survey so our region is properly represented. Nationwide, the crop estimates also provide producers with vital information about crop supplies, as well as market movements and trends. Policy makers and regulators use the survey data because they know it is complete and accurate," states Aubrey Davis, Director of the New England field office in Concord, New Hampshire. As with all NASS survey work, individual operator information is kept strictly confidential, and is exempt from requests under the Freedom of Information Act. The individual reports are only used in combination to establish state and national statistics.

Approximately 740 New England farmers are being asked to participate in this voluntary study. Producers selected for the survey will receive a letter requesting their assistance on this important project. Interviewers will be asking for their help from May 30, 2002 through June 14, 2002.

The national survey results will be available from Washington, D.C. in the **Acreage Report** on June 28, 2002 at 8:30 a.m., and for potatoes, the **Crop Production Report** on July 11, 2002 at 8:30 a.m. All reports are available on the Internet within minutes of the scheduled release time, and the statistics are reprinted in the July issue of the **Ag Review**. The monthly New England **Ag Review** is available on the Internet and complimentary copies will be mailed to survey participants upon request.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Located in Concord, New Hampshire, it is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six states in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through E-mail at [nass-nh@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-nh@nass.usda.gov). All national statistics and state level newsletters are available free from E-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.]

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